

# A Guide to Healthy Food Choices

**Eating the right foods can help lower your lipids. But which foods are considered "the right foods"?**

1. It is appropriate to obtain 30% of your daily calories from fat as long as they are not from trans-fats and saturated fats. Trans-fats are fats found in prepared foods that contain partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, such as cookies, crackers, most margarines, and fried foods. It is important to omit saturated fats such as red meats, whole milk products, and butter. Instead of trans-fats and saturated fats, you should use unsaturated or monosaturated fats as found in nuts, seeds, grains, fish, poultry, and liquid such as canola, olive, corn, peanut, and other vegetable oils. *Avoid foods that are fried in any type of oil or fat.*

2. Carbohydrates, or "carbs" are the main source of energy for the body. They are also the part of food that raises blood sugar levels the most. *Therefore carbs become even more important for people with diabetes.* The body turns carbs from food into glucose (sugar). You should eat less refined-grain carbohydrates and more whole grain carbohydrates. One of the biggest problems with lower fat diets is the increase in caloric intake from starches such as potatoes, white rice, corn, carrots, pasta, and bread made from white flour. Watch out for high-fat carbs. Even though different carb foods all have the same effect on the blood sugar, remember to think about the rest of your health. Choose carbs that are low in fat and high in fiber. *Eating more vegetables and fruits will tend to lower your blood pressure, prevent heart attacks, strokes as well as some cancers.*

3. Choose healthier sources of proteins such as: beans, nuts, fish (recommended twice a week), poultry, and egg whites.

## Goals of the Healthy Heart Diet:

### 1. Eat less total fat, especially saturated fat.

Foods high in fat consist of 1) Meats, especially red meats, 2) High Fat Dairy Products, and 3) Eggs.

1. Choose low-fat dairy products: skim milk, fat-free or low-fat cheese (those made from 2% milk), fat-free sour cream, and yogurt.
2. Use lean meats, poultry and fish and limit servings to 4-6 oz. per day.
3. Trim all visible fat.
4. Avoid using butter, bacon fat, or shortening for cooking.
5. Use very small amounts of vegetable oils and soft margarine.
6. Avoid foods that are deep fat fried.
7. Avoid gravies or sauces made with butter, bacon fat, or cream.
8. Limit egg yolks to two per week. You may use all the egg whites you want.
9. Avoid all organ meats.

Note: By following the above points our daily cholesterol intake will be limited to 300mg or less. This level is what the American Heart Association recommends.

### 2. Eat less cholesterol.

### 3. Eat less sodium or salt.

1. Avoid using salt at the table and in cooking.
2. Avoid foods that use salt as a preservative: pickles, olives, sauerkraut, canned foods, and cured foods.
3. Avoid salted snack foods such as chips, nuts or part crackers.
4. Read food labels of canned and packaged foods; look for "low sodium" or "no salt added".
5. Limit condiments such as mustard, catsup, picante sauce, tartar sauce or steak sauce to no more than a total of 1 tablespoon per day.
6. Use herbs and spices to flavor foods.
7. Try eating more foods in their natural, unprocessed state and more home-cooked "from scratch" meals.

### 4. Maintain a desirable body weight.

### 5. Learn to read food labels carefully when shopping.